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# TIPS

## On Personnel Management

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
for SUPERVISORS

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

from the Director of Personnel

AUGUST, 1963

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Washington, D.C

**NOTE TO SUPERVISORS:**  
Failing all others, one interest supervisors and employees share in common is that of leave. In this, they are as one. As this "TIPS" title so aptly states, "LEAVE IS MONEY IN THE BANK." It has been earned and saved--by the supervisor no less than the employee--to be "spent" judiciously and with consideration for others.  
To "abuse" leave on the one hand and to hoard it on the other is just as foolish as throwing money away with abandon or hoarding it with miserly acquisitiveness.  
One leads to bankruptcy. The other makes "Jack a dull boy."  
This "TIPS" endeavors to explore this topic of lively interest --with a few red signals on its potential for use and abuse.

*Carl B. Barnes*  
Carl B. Barnes  
Director of Personnel



## LEAVE IS MONEY IN THE BANK

!!! Have you ever considered that leave is like a bank account?

!!! It is subject to deposits and withdrawals

!!! You can request a loan

!!! It has a built-in savings plan

!!! It can be overdrawn

!!! The balance accumulates interest

You, as a SUPERVISOR act as the trustee of this negotiable item-THE EMPLOYEE'S LEAVE ACCOUNT.

Like a BANK PRESIDENT, you must see that your assets are:

INVESTED SOUNDLY so there is an assured dividend for the employee and a 'fair return' for the office.

Your direct responsibility is to:

Develop an understanding and appreciation of WHAT LEAVE IS and HOW IT SHOULD BE USED.

PLAN leave

PROVIDE fair and equitable approval of leave

## LEAVE -- A COMPLEX SUBJECT

Leave is available for a number of purposes, i.e., voting, vacations, jury duty, military training, sickness, etc. In this "TIPS" issue, we will delve into some aspects of annual and sick leave.

## ANNUAL LEAVE

James Howell's "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is as familiar to everyone as the 4th of July.

This oft-quoted saying illustrates in simple words why it is desirable for an employee to spend time away from the office to recapture the vim and vigor of a refreshed outlook on life in general and his work in particular.

Annual vacations for employees are not new or revolutionary. Providing employees with an extended period of freedom from work has long been recognized as a contributory factor to improved employee on-the-job performance.

Hence, annual leave was primarily designed to permit employees such a "respite" from their daily office worries and problems.

LEAVE IS LIKE  
MONEY IN THE BANK





This theory is not ours alone; countries all over the world support it in some fashion.

In the Soviet Union, for example, workers are provided rest homes in which they may spend their vacations. Actually, facilities are very limited; only the "elite" worker receives this benefit, and the principle of equality is not realized in practice. Nevertheless, the need for "worker relaxation" is recognized.

Sometimes a change of setting is enough to provide "stimulus." The President of the United States, although continuing to direct the country's vast daily business, many times does so in different surroundings. Thus, he gains his much-needed change and break in routine.

"The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure."

--Ecclesiastes XXXVII-24

A well-administered annual leave program provides a two-way street of dividends.

The work of the office and the Supervisor benefit from an employee whose mental outlook and physical well-being have been revitalized due to a change in pace and several weeks away from the office.

You may be the Supervisor, but a relaxed, rested and refreshed employee reflects favorably on you and increases his contribution to your daily operations and accomplishments.

In addition to vacations, annual leave is available for short-term purposes--personal to an employee. There's the day off an employee needs to show Aunt Millie the town; or the desire for a few hours to catch that "once in a lifetime" sale at the local department store.

## ENTER THE SUPERVISOR

The use of annual leave does not rest solely within an employee's discretion. It must be approved in advance by the Supervisor. The Supervisor determines when it can best be granted. His approval depends on the office work situation and the employee's need.

It is the Supervisor's responsibility to schedule his organization's work so that everyone will have

a reasonable opportunity for rest and recreation. Planning for such leave is expected to be on the basis of actual work time available per employee with leave time figured as a regular obligation to be met--not merely a "frill" to be allowed when a slack in work develops.

Therefore, advance planning of vacations by both the employee and the Supervisor is necessary.

A Supervisor should adopt the practice of considering all vacation requests at one time if possible. He can then weigh workload demands against vacation requests. Such a practice will enable him to have an adequate work force on hand throughout the vacation periods.

A Supervisor may find several requests for vacations coinciding or overlapping which would result in depleting his work force beyond reason. When such a situation occurs, he should talk with the employees concerned, explain the problem, and request their cooperation in adjusting their plans.

A Supervisor who utilizes an advance method of considering and approving vacation leave gives employees an opportunity to make firm travel plans. Or, in the event some changes have to be made, the employees can select the next best time to be off prior to making travel and reservation commitments.

Where some workload crisis prevents an employee from taking his vacation at the hoped-for time, it is usually desirable to see that he has preference over others in getting his vacation when work permits. Again, the employee, insofar as possible, should be a party to arriving at mutually agreeable dates. Little benefit can be derived when an employee is forced to take extended leave at a time when he is unable to utilize it according to his interests.

Employee--"Sir, can you let me off tomorrow afternoon to go Christmas shopping with my wife?"

Supervisor--"Certainly not!! We are too busy!"  
Employee (much relieved)--"Thank you sir, you are very kind!"

Although this employee was overjoyed that his request for leave was denied, the Supervisor's snap answer illustrates a common practice in many offices.

Let's explore how a Supervisor should analyze and consider a request for short-term leave by using this example:

Employee--"Sir, may I have tomorrow off? I would like to accompany my wife to the doctor's office."

The Supervisor's answer should take into consideration:

- 1) Employee's mental attitude--is he upset or worried?
- 2) Is the need urgent?
- 3) Would the employee be ineffective at work

during this period because of his concern or anxiety?

- 4) Could the workload be adjusted to accommodate the employee's request?

Applying this type of reasoning to requests for short-term leave should result in an equitable answer for all concerned.

Not to be overlooked in the overall administration of annual leave is the Supervisor's personal responsibility in his use of annual leave. The Supervisor sets "an example" for his employees. His use of annual leave directly affects an employee's ideas and attitude toward annual leave usage.



**GIVE VACATION CONSIDERATION  
TO THE OVER WORKED.**

SHUCKS!...  
IT'S RAINING  
OUTSIDE...  
THINK I'LL TAKE  
SICK LEAVE  
TODAY.



## SICK LEAVE

"Healing is a matter of time, but it sometimes is also a matter of opportunity."

Hippocrates

As long ago as 1893, Congress recognized that the Government, as an employer, had an obligation to provide its employees with a type of paid leave for illness. In that year, they enacted sick leave legislation.

Unlike annual leave, sick leave is provided on a uniform basis; it is not in direct ratio to length of service. In principle, then, all employees under the Leave Act, from the first to the last, are provided with the same protection in periods of illness.

Recognition is also given to the fact that extended illness and need for hospitalization most generally occur when an employee is in the upper-age group--thus, the open-end accumulation privilege.

Sick leave availability for preventive medical attention purposes was acknowledged in 1944 by

amending the Leave Act to permit employees to use sick leave to cover physical, dental, or optical examinations.

Therefore, sick leave is available for use in several ways. How then does an employee use this type of leave?

Some employees have the notion that because they are granted a certain number of days sick leave per year, they are entitled to take it whether they are actually ill or not.

Others use sick leave carelessly. A trip to the doctor's office for a prescription should not take eight hours of sick leave. A whole day for a minor ailment which may have been discomforting for only an hour or two is unrealistic.

There is the employee who decides to stay home merely because upon awakening he feels tired, generally disgusted, and not up to facing eight hours work. He may find that actual facing up to the problem by going to work will turn the day into one of relief and gladness that it was conquered with less trouble than anticipated.

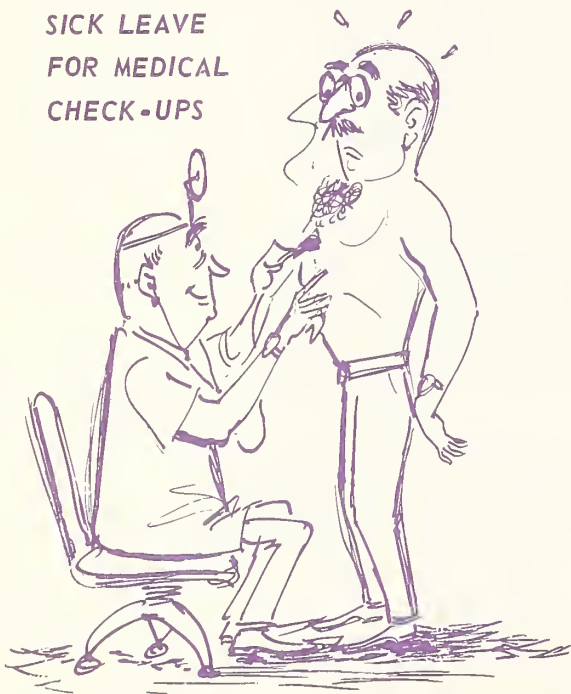


Let's be sure to add, however, that in some cases, an employee's feeling of lassitude and despair of the approaching workday may be well-served by a day off--annual leave.

On the other side of the coin, is the employee who forces himself to go to work even though he is physically unable to perform his work in the manner required. Sometimes he believes that his absence would create havoc in the office. In some instances, due to the nature of his illness, more damage is done to his co-workers and the work of the office than would have been true if he had stayed home.

Sometimes, an employee will not utilize his sick leave for needed medical examinations. He is often-times reluctant to seek such attention, or simply procrastinates.

**SOMETIMES  
OLDER FOLKS  
NEED MORE  
SICK LEAVE  
FOR MEDICAL  
CHECK-UPS**



The management of an effective sick leave program depends on the Supervisor's interest and leadership. Concern for employees rather than things should be his guidepost in administering and approving sick leave.

## THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

The Supervisor's role in granting sick leave is generally thought of as purely administrative. All he has to do is say "yes" or "no". However, such answers are not all inclusive.

There is the role of counselor and friend which the Supervisor can and should play. Such a role can make the Supervisor realize and recognize that in certain questionable cases there may be extenuating circumstances which support the employee's request for or use of sick leave.

Of primary importance to a Supervisor is an awareness of an employee's physical well-being. Such awareness will permit him to impart understanding and appreciation when considering his request.

There are many danger signals which can alert him to a change in an employee's behavior and a need to offer assistance and direction.

For example, a quiet person may become more withdrawn than usual, or vice versa. An overly conscientious person may become even more concerned with details. Is there a reason for this? Possibly a friendly talk with the employee might produce the answer. In some cases, talking over an employee's problems with him is better than granting him two days sick leave.

Some employees react emotionally during heavy workload periods. Is this a normal reaction and of no great concern or is there a contributing physical reason?

Where an employee's chronic illness interferes rather consistently with the work of the office, the Supervisor may want to help the employee seek medical advice or assistance.

A Supervisor should adhere to Benjamin Franklin's adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" by encouraging an employee to use his sick leave for periodic medical check-ups. An employee who utilizes his sick leave for such check-ups affords "protection" for himself and his Supervisor. And remember, well planned use of annual leave is good health insurance too.



How an employee uses his sick leave is of interest to a Supervisor not only while the employee is under his supervision, but in future promotion and job considerations. Excessive usage of sick leave, a small sick leave balance, or the consistent use of sick leave on the same days over a period of time are examples of leave usage which might cause a Supervisor to raise his eyebrows and ponder.

Again, as in the case of annual leave, a Supervisor set his policy by his own use of sick leave.

Basically, it is up to the Supervisor to make it clear to employees that sick leave is only for illness and that it is a form of insurance for their own protection.

"The first years of a man must make provision for the last." Samuel Johnson

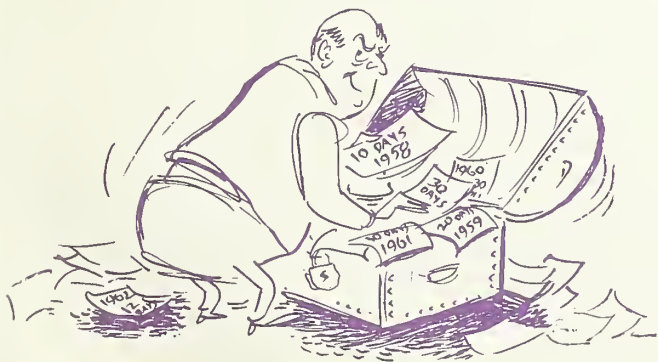
And supervisors and employees should remember that well planned use of annual leave - to get off the job - to relax and fish - or take the family to the beach will in the long run result in more sick leave in the bank.

## WHAT PRICE ANNUAL AND SICK LEAVE?

In comparing LEAVE to a BANK ACCOUNT, we find that leave is subject to the same extremes of handling.

Ben Franklin expressed this concept aptly, when he said:

"Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship."



**THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE LEAVE MISERS...**



**AND THEN**

**THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE SPENDTHRIFTS**

The "frittering" away of an hour of annual leave here, a half day sick leave there, and so on, is not reprehensible in itself. BUT, the consequences should be considered.

Annual leave - Up to the allowable accumulation, unused annual leave can amount to a tidy nest egg. It can serve well in a time of need. It can add to security--and it does grow in worth and value.

You have heard the expression; TIME IS MONEY." It exemplifies the case for reasonable accumulation of annual leave.

Has it ever occurred to you that each hour of annual leave carries a price tag? That this price tag is changed with every promotion or salary increase an employee receives.

Here's an example of the increase in the price of annual leave:

### EMPLOYEE'S PRESENT EARNINGS:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Annual Salary .....                                      | \$4,565.00 |
| Leave Accumulation (160 hours or 20 days) \$2.20 ph..... | \$352.00   |

### PROMOTION OR SALARY INCREASE FOR EMPLOYEE:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| New Annual Salary.....   | \$5,540.00 |
| Former Leave Accumulation (160 hours or 20 days) \$2.67 ph (new rate)..... | \$427.20   |

Think how much more this annual leave accumulation would mean in dollars and cents to an employee upon his resignation, retirement, etc.

Sick leave - This type of leave accumulation should be viewed as a form of insurance. It guarantees a continued income during a period of incapacity to work.

An employee should guard his sick leave jealously and wisely. If he uses it in a haphazard manner he will have no "cushion" of accumulated leave to fall back on in case of an extended serious illness.

But, an employee should also view the availability of sick leave as an incentive to have periodic preventive medical check-ups.

"You've already had leave Ferguson, to see your wife off on a journey--for your mother-in-law's funeral--for your little girl's measles--your boy's christening--what is it now?"

"I'm going to get married sir."

It should be added that, as in all matters, judgment must be applied in the use and accumulation of annual and sick leave. The sacrifice of

physical well-being and mental restimulation is not compensated by a large leave balance.

Samuel Johnson presented a balanced approach to the use of leave when he said:

"A man who both spends and saves money is the happiest man, because he has both enjoyments."

## IN CONCLUSION

Although the basic outlines of the annual and sick leave system are provided by law and civil service regulations a Supervisor has considerable responsibility for the administration of such leave.

He should guard against the abuse of such leave. But, he should also be equally diligent in urging and approving its use when justified.

Supervisors and employees should always bear in mind the many facets which annual and sick leave use can and do involve.

"Every why hath a wherefore."

Shakespeare

